

September 4, 1985

A candidate for Governor of New Jersey, who is a member of the Ku Klux Klan, has applied for a permit to hold a rally of his supporters on the steps of the Newark City Hall.

The United States of America is a free country that guarantees the right of free speech and peaceful assembly, even to those persons and groups who wish to make fools of themselves in public.

I see no reason why this man should be denied a permit to hold a rally of his supporters. However, I strongly object to permitting him to dignify the assembly by the use of the steps at the entrance to the seat of government of the City of Newark.

The two public parks in the center of the city are the proper places for public assembly. Let this man and his supporters use Military Park, an area dedicated to the memory of those men and women who gave their lives to establish principles which he and his followers cannot understand. Or let them use Washington Park, where the Newark Public Library and the Newark Museum can look across the street and see the antics of a bunch of clowns who do not realize that they are living in the last decades of the 20th century.

These people seek publicity. Denial of permit or counter-demonstrations will give them what they want. Are we so gullible as to fall into this trap? Let him and his supporters put on their act. I hope the citizens of Newark will have sense enough to let the act play to an empty street; the only audience the trees and statues in the park.

From his standpoint, and that of his supporters, the worst thing that can happen is to be ignored.


D. J. Henderson